

Exploring the Waterfalls of Southern California

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costs. Any money left over was to be retained by the company and distributed among the colonists at the end of the year. Unfortunately, this never happened.

The colony was plagued by problems, including an investigation by the California Commission on Corporations as well as divisive internal

politics. Economically, Llano was never able to succeed, and growing water problems eventually forced Harriman to look for another location. In 1917 he purchased a large tract of land in Louisiana from the Gulf Lumber Co. and grandly announced the relocation as an expansion of the colony.

Harriman died in 1925, but

his colony in Louisiana, New Llano, struggled until 1938. Although Llano del Rio went into bankruptcy in 1918, a few settlers remained until 1921.

Today, the stone ruins are all that's left of Llano del Rio. Rising from the desert floor, they serve as ghostly monuments to long-forgotten ideals.

—Orville O. Clarke Jr.

Llano is located about 65 miles north of Los Angeles: Drive north on I-5 or I-405 to state Route 14. Exit before Palmdale on Route 18. The ruins are visible on both sides of the highway, about one mile west of Llano. (From the eastern basin, follow I-15 north, exit at Route 138, and travel west on routes 138 and 18.)

Spelunking With a Paddle

A network of sea caves attracts kayakers to Santa Cruz Island's north coast.



Bob Howells

Silhouetted against the light at the entrance of a cavern, a kayaker prepares to enter the darkened interior.

Paddling a kayak into the gaping (130-foot-high) mouth of Painted Cave, you're a minute Jonah entering a giant rock esophagus. You and your companions are bright specks on an inky sea as you slide into the dimming light. Six hundred feet back, the cavern narrows. Although the inner chamber is still 15 feet high, you can't help but duck as you paddle across its threshold.

You paddle another 200 feet. Everyone is silent now. The ocean surge creates a gentle splash against the walls. To the rear, the mouth of the cave is like a distant candle, dimly illuminating the porous ceiling, revealing abstract patterns that might have been painted by ancient cave dwellers. That notion is absurd, of course.

You're seeing patterned algae.

A second inner chamber extends farther into the darkness—the cave is four football fields long—but you need a low tide and an absence of surge to proceed. You paddle back toward the light.

Aquasports of Santa Barbara delivers and guides sea kayakers, who need no paddling experience to maneuver the stable craft. On a typical trip, kayakers will paddle three or four miles and explore a dozen sea caves. Most find the paddling easy, but a dinghy is along to aid stragglers. The two-hour trip across the channel is aboard *Spirit*—no water taxi but a well-outfitted, 48-foot research vessel whose skipper, Peter Howorth, is director of the Marine Mammal Center of

Santa Barbara. No one knows the channel's marine life better.

Much of the north coast (the mainland-facing side) of Santa Cruz Island, the largest of the Channel Islands, consists of Swiss-cheese headlands: huge caves, many of them interconnected, many inhabited by sea lions that seem bemused by the presence of sea kayakers.

The cost for the one-day trip is \$125, including food, the kayak and instruction. The trip runs about every other week, depending on demand. There's no season in the channel; its wonders are year-round, and so are Aquasports' trips. The company is located at 214 Helena Avenue in Santa Barbara. Phone (800) 24-KAYAK for reservations.

—Bob Howells